

REMARKS

Introduction

Applicants thank the Examiner for the detailed Office Action dated March 23, 2004. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the reasons that follow.

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claims 6-10, 23-28, 35-40, and 46-47 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 35, 36, and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,508,689 (Rado et al.). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Rado et al. does not identically disclose Applicants' claimed invention.

Claims 35, 36, and 40 are in independent form.

Independent Claims 35 and 36

Applicants respectfully submit that Rado et al. does not identically disclose the combination of limitations recited in independent Claims 35 and 36. For example, independent Claim 35 recites “[a] multipurpose modular vehicle” comprising, among other elements, “a chassis and a variant module,” wherein “the variant module being removable and replaceable with other variant modules having other mechanical drive devices **to provide the vehicle with other types of overall functionality.**” Claim 36 recites “[a] multipurpose modular vehicle” comprising, among other elements, “a variant module,” with “the variant module being removable and replaceable with other variant modules to **substantially alter the overall functionality of the vehicle.**”

Applicants respectfully submit that swapping out a CD player with a tape player does not “**provide the vehicle with other types of overall functionality**” or “**substantially alter the overall functionality of the vehicle**” as required by independent Claims 35 and 36, respectively. Swapping a CD player with a tape player does not alter the **overall functionality** of the vehicle. Accordingly, the above recited limitations in combination with the other limitations recited in Claims 35 and 36, respectively, are not identically disclosed by swapping a CD player with a tape player in a vehicle. Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 35 and 36 be withdrawn.

Independent Claim 40

Applicants respectfully submit that Rado et al. does not identically disclose the combination of limitations recited in independent Claim 40. For example, independent Claim 40 recites “[a] control method for an equipment service vehicle having a plurality of input devices, a plurality of output devices, and a plurality of microprocessor-based interface modules,” “the plurality of interface modules being connected to respective ones of the plurality of input and output devices,” the method comprising, among other things, “storing I/O status information at each respective one of the plurality of interface modules” and “processing the I/O status information at each respective one of the plurality of interface modules to determine desired output states for a subset of the plurality of output devices,” wherein “**all** of the desired output states are determined locally at the respective interface module to which the output devices are connected based on the I/O status information.”

Applicants respectfully submit that Rado et al. does not identically disclose locally determining **all** of the desired output states at the respective interface module to which the output devices are connected based on the I/O status information. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 40 be withdrawn.

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Applicants respectfully submit that each and every outstanding objection and rejection has been overcome, and the present Application is in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 06-1447. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 06-1447.

Respectfully submitted,

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